

# PEOPLE & THINGS

By ATTICUS

THE moment of decision has arrived. No longer can I keep that £5 note in my pocket. After much thought I have decided to award the prize for the best suggestion of a new monument in London to Mr. H. N. Price, of Trinity College, Glenalmond, Perth. One of the reasons for naming him the winner is that he planned a monument that would be justified historically and emotionally. His idea was that the statue would comprise a small group of Unknown Heroes during the blitz on London with an air-raid warden flanked by a fireman, a rescue worker and an ambulance unit with a doctor and a nurse.

It will be remembered that one of the conditions of the contest was that the person or persons to be commemorated must have lived and died in the twentieth century: no one can deny that Mr. Price's little group meets that requirement. It is part of our pride and sorrow as a nation that so many gave their lives in the Battle for London. The treatment of such a group could be dramatic without any need for exaggeration.

A large number of readers wanted a monument to John Baird, who invented television. Other favourites were Sir Alexander Fleming, Sir Edward Elgar, Mrs. Pankhurst—who already has a statue—Tommy Handley, Lord Nuffield, Oscar Wilde; and there was a strong section in favour of the great men of science.

To all who wrote to me I offer my thanks—and congratulations to the winner.

## Balliolenses

MY Balliol friends tell me that the Prime Minister was in brilliant form at the dinner given by old members of the College to him and the Lord Chancellor on Monday, to mark the first occasion since Asquith and Loreburn that both offices have been held simultaneously by Balliol men.

Mr. Macmillan managed just the right blend of wit and solemnity, cheerfulness and distinction, that such an occasion calls for. "As is well known," he said—or so it is reported to me—"Ministers do not write their own speeches: they are written for them by their officials. In the more ruthless departments, like the Foreign Office, the process is naked and unashamed. The speech is prepared in the appropriate department, corrected by the Private Office,

and handed to the Minister a few minutes before he is due to deliver it. In the more romantic departments, however, like the Treasury, the same procedure is disguised with a thin pretence of deference. The Minister is handed, not his speech, but what is known as his brief."

And Mr. Macmillan continued to build his own speech around an imagined "brief" thus prepared for him on the occasion: "The Prime Minister will no doubt wish to open with some reference to the Scottish origin of the College. Some notes are appended..."

## Teyte and Style

I HOPE it is not a sign of an inferiority complex, but I confess I am always especially delighted when I hear of an English artist being honoured by the French. And when, as we heard last week, the English artist is that gay, ebullient and exquisite singer Maggie Teyte—who has been made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour—my pleasure is re-

newed.

What a career she has had!

Born in Staffordshire ("where?



MISS MAGGIE TEYTE

she sardonically quotes, "the orchids grow on the pith banks"), she was at nineteen chosen by Debussy to sing Melisande in his only opera—and she knew that sensitive, sultry lion well: "Richard Strauss?" he said to her, "... a marvellous technician, nothing else... tremendous orchestral effects with absolutely no musical foundation. Wagner? A great literary and dramatic genius, but no musician."

Equally well known—and well loved—in the opera houses and concert halls of France, Britain and America (nobody could more enchantingly get on terms with her audience by ruefully forgetting the words of her first song) she has certainly served French music well. Few other singers can claim to have

been accompanied by Debussy, Rubinstein, Cortot and Gerald Moore; and now she is busy transmitting the secrets of her art to many devoted young pupils in London. But can so delicate an art be divorced from so distinct a personality?

## Comparison

MR. ARTHUR SULZBERGER,

publisher of the "New York Times," a newspaper-man to his finger-tips and a most welcome visitor, has been renewing friendships in London. It is a tribute to the American reading public that both the daily and Sunday editions of his monumental paper are heavily supported by the public and by the national advertisers. In fact the Sunday "New York Times," with its various sections, has so many pages that I asked Mr. Drew Middleton, the head of the London Bureau, how much the week-end edition weighed. He put it to the test in his office and found that it was just under three pounds. "But this is the quiet time of the year," he explained, "when advertising is light. Two months ago we were averaging five to six pounds!" This thirty-two-page issue of THE SUNDAY TIMES, as I add, weighs eight and a half ounces.

## Coincidental

IT is a strange coincidence that twice within a few days the voice of a woman should be heard intervening in that male sanctum sanctorum, the House of Lords. Or is it a coincidence?

The affair of Lord Cohen's woman statistical expert, who spoke up when he was interrupted on a figure while making a speech in the Upper House, was a subject of conversation at a cocktail party given last Tuesday to welcome Sir Laurence Olivier and his Stratford company back from their European tour. And it was at that party, I gather, that Lady Olivier asked Lord Bessborough if he could get seats for her and her husband to hear part of the Lords' debate on Thursday on State support for the Arts, the debate which provoked her notorious protest.

Was this coincidence? Lady Olivier says her intervention was a matter of impulse, but the thought may have been working subconsciously in her mind. And there remains the mystery of the "special agent" who turned up on Wednesday night at the "Manchester Guardian's" London office and said that Vivien Leigh was going to speak in the House of Lords about the St. James's Theatre. Coincidence? Or clairvoyance?

## Smoke-screen

RECENTLY at the showing of a new film I would gladly have agreed to turn the cinema into an office building or even a factory. As a preliminary, let me venture the assertion that we Britons have a solid claim to being the most insensitive people in the world. The basis of my denunciation is that I went to see a film and was able to catch only glimpses of it through clouds of cigarette smoke. And as if that were not enough I had two cigar smokers on my left, and you know, of course, that all draughts in a cinema travel from left to right.

Within my eyes were watering and my lungs were aching. I suggested to the two cigar smokers that they might desist. Their indignation was exceeded only by their incredulity. How can a man enjoy freedom if he is not allowed to annoy, smother and bind the person sitting next to him in a cinema?

Almost nowhere else in the civilised world are cinema patrons allowed to smoke.

except sometimes in the last couple of rows. Perhaps Vivien Leigh would take on this crusade next, but in the meantime the cinemas should do something and make their audiences conform at least to the level of untutored savages.

## Long Service

ONE of the most impregnable records in British journalism was quietly shattered a few days ago when Sir Bruce Ingram, editor of the "Illustrated London News," completed fifty-seven and a half years of editorship, thus breaking C. P. Scott's record with the "Manchester Guardian." It was in 1902 that, fresh from Oxford, the twenty-three-year-old Bruce Ingram found himself on probation as editor of the periodical which had already been in his family for fifty-eight years. Almost at once he was faced with bringing out a twenty-four-page supplement on the death of Queen Victoria. After his mammoth issue on the war in the Transvaal had sold out at two and sixpence a copy he was confirmed in office.

When King Edward VII died he published a drawing of the death-bed scene before any of his rivals by acting as a model for the artist. It is true that the artist was able to draw the head from photographs of the dead King, but Bruce Ingram spent the evening before press-day lying blanket-covered on a bed in his office. So successful was the result that Queen Alexandra signed and accepted the original drawing. Quite obviously an editor of such resource should not even contemplate retiring after an innings of a mere fifty-eight years.

## What is Bravery?

A COLLEAGUE who visited Stirling Moss at the London Clinic on Thursday found him full of beans. The infected sinus which caused him to collapse so dramatically at Orly Airport had been successfully drained, and he was attacking a large plate of scrambled eggs.

He was full of indignation at what he considered a scurrilous open letter to Fangio from an American magazine publisher. Headed "To the phoney champion of the world" it challenged Fangio to race at Indianapolis against American drivers. "How can they do this to my hero?" Moss demanded, only half-jokingly. "If the Americans are so wonderful, why won't they race in the wet?" Then he added, with a characteristic grin: "Anyway what's so clever about being brave? I've done some silly things racing in my time, but I'm not brave."

## People and Words

WHEN I became a judge, I thought that whenever I had a judgment to write I would write it with a bottle of port at my elbow. But I gave it up—it spoiled the port!

—LORD GODDARD.

Lord Chief Justice.

BRITAIN now has enough admirals to sink a battleship, if they all get on board together.

—MR. MARCUS LIPSON, M.P.

IF a nation pays itself seven per cent. more for doing no more work, as happened in Britain last year, price increases will follow as night follows day.

—MR. PETER THORNEYCROFT, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

I AM sorry to keep the court waiting—but my train caught fire!

—LORD EVERSHEN.

Master of the Rolls.

THE longer M.P.s sit in Parliament, the more they tend to become fungi on the walls—absorbing, absorbing and absorbing, but having nothing constructive whatever to do with what they absorb.

—MAJOR H. T. SMITH, ROBERTSON, M.P.